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E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: PINT, FR
SUBJ: FRANCE: A HOUSE DIVIDED

NOTE: THIS CABLE IS THE FIRST IN A SERIES OF
OVERVIEWS--WHICH WE ARE CALLING "ELECTIONS 1978"--
POINTING TO THE MARCH ELECTIONS IN FRANCE.

INTRODUCTION AND SUMMARY: FRANCE REMAINS A DIVIDED
COUNTRY--DIVIDED LESS ALONG LEFT-RIGHT LINES THAN
BETWEEN THOSE WHO INSIST ON THE MERITS OF ORDER AND
THOSE WHO EMPHASIZE CHANGE. THE POLITICAL CENTER,
WHICH GISCARD HAS TRIED TO OCCUPY, IS WEAK, ENERVATED
BY THE ELECTORAL SYSTEM (WHICH DISCOURAGES CENTER
COALITIONS) BY THE SURVIVAL OF A POLARIZING RHETORIC
WHICH DATES BACK TO THE FRENCH REVOLUTION, AND BY THE
FACT THAT SERIOUS ECONOMIC DISPARITIES STILL EXIST.
MOST PARTIES--EVEN A SIGNIFICANT ELEMENT OF THE
GAULLISTS--ADVOCATE SOCIAL REFORM, AND MOST OF THE
ELECTORATE (DESPITE THE SELF-DESTRUCTIVE ATTITUDES
OF THE FRENCH LEFT) STILL WANTS A CHANGE. THE ISSUES
WHICH TROUBLE PEOPLE INCLUDE THE BASIC ECONOMIC ONES
(INFLATION AND UNEMPLOYMENT) BUT ALSO THE SENSE THAT
THE HIGHLY CENTRALIZED FRENCH POLITICAL AND SOCIAL
SYSTEM STULTIFIES INDIVIDUAL EFFORT AND INITIATIVE
AND--PERHAPS MOST IMPORTANT--THE FEELING THAT THE SAME
OLD CROWD HAS BEEN AROUND TOO LONG. IT IS BY NO MEANS
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CLEAR, HOWEVER, HOW SUCH FRUSTRATIONS WILL MANIFEST
THEMSELVES AT THE POLLS. AND EVEN IF THE VERDICT OF
THE ELECTIONS POINTS TOWARD A CENTRIST CONSENSUS FOR
MODERATE REFORM, THERE IS NO CERTAINTY THAT THE FRENCH
ELECTORAL AND POLITICAL SYSTEM WILL ACCOMMODATE A
GOVERNMENTAL ARRANGEMENT WHICH REFLECTS THAT CONSENSUS.
END INTRODUCTION AND SUMMARY.

1. IT IS NOT UNCOMMON TO FIND EUROPEAN COUNTRIES
GOVERNED--AND GOVERNED FOR YEARS AND IN RELATIVELY
STABLE CONDITIONS--BY REGIMES WHICH HAVE WON AT THE
POLLS A BARE MAJORITY OR EVEN LESS. BUT IT IS RARE
TO FIND THIS DIVISION TAKE ON THE INTRANSIGENT IDEO-
LOGICAL TONE THAT IT DOES IN FRANCE. PROBABLY IN
NO OTHER COUNTRY THAN FRANCE WOULD THE QUESTION OF AN
OPPOSITION LEADER (IN THIS CASE SOCIALIST PARTY LEADER
MITTERRAND) CALLING ON THE CHIEF OF STATE BECOME AN
IMPORTANT MATTER OF PRINCIPLE. IN THE UK OR FRG SUCH
A MEETING WOULD BE CALLED CONSULTATION. IN FRANCE IT
WOULD BE CALLED COLLABORATION--BY THE COMMUNISTS AND
EVEN BY ELEMENTS OF MITTERRAND'S SOCIALISTS. THUS,
MITTERRAND HAS FELT IT NECESSARY TO BOYCOTT THE

ELYSEE. UNDERSTANDING SUCH ABERRANT BEHAVIOR WOULD REQUIRE A DETAILED EXAMINATION OF MANY HISTORICAL FACTORS. WHAT INTERESTS THE OBSERVER MORE IN UNDERSTANDING THE POLITICAL CONTEXT IS THE SOCIAL AND ECONOMIC HERITAGE WHICH HAS BEEN TRANSMITTED, HOW THIS HERITAGE MANIFESTS ITSELF IN TERMS OF REAL PROBLEMS AND WHAT ROLE THEY PLAY IN THE ELECTIONS LOOMING IN TWO MONTHS TIME.

2. A DIVIDED FRANCE IS NOT A NEW PHENOMENON. SIXTEEN YEARS OF GAULLISM AND THE VOTING SYSTEM (FAVORING BIG COALITIONS OVER MULTIPLE PARTIES) WHICH WAS READOPTED AT THE BEGINNING OF THE FIFTH REPUBLIC

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ARE ONLY NEW INSTITUTIONAL ORNAMENTS WHICH WERE PLACED ON TOP OF A MUCH OLDER SUPERSTRUCTURE WHICH HAD EVOLVED MUCH MORE SLOWLY THAN MOST PEOPLE THOUGHT. THE OLD HABITS AND OLD PROBLEMS WHICH DIVIDED FRANCE INTO HAVES AND HAVE-NOTS WERE ALWAYS THERE. THE PROLETARIAN REVOLUTIONS NEVER BROKE DOWN THE BOURGEOISIE (AND NOT EVEN THE ARISTOCRACY ENTIRELY), WHILE THE SOCIAL REVOLUTION OF THE 19TH CENTURY AFFECTED THE WORKING CLASS IN FRANCE MUCH LESS THAN ELSEWHERE. THIS TRADITION OF CONFLICT TOOK DIFFERENT FORMS IN THIS CENTURY, FORMS WHICH ARE STILL VERY VISIBLE; SOCIALISTS AND COMMUNISTS (EITHER SEPARATELY OR TOGETHER) AGAINST ALL THE OTHERS, LAY VERSUS CHRISTIAN, RESISTANTS VERSUS COLLABORATORS. ON TOP OF THIS, BUT VERY MUCH RELATED, ARE ECONOMIC FACTORS. THE INDUSTRIAL REVOLUTION CAME FAIRLY LATE TO FRANCE, WITH THE CONSEQUENCE THAT THE COUNTRY REMAINED ECONOMICALLY BEHIND ITS NEIGHBORS UNTIL RECENT YEARS. IT WASN'T UNTIL AFTER WORLD WAR II, AND REALLY UNTIL THE LATE 1950S AND THE 1960S, WHEN FRANCE BEGAN TO BENEFIT FROM HER MEMBERSHIP IN THE EC, THAT SHE COULD CONSIDER HERSELF A MODERN ECONOMY. BUT EVEN THEN MANY BASIC ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL STRUCTURES REMAINED ARCHAIC AND HAVE CONTRIBUTED TO MAINTAINING EARLIER DIVISIONS.

3. CONSEQUENCES OF THIS HERITAGE: THE FOREIGNER IS

STRUCK BY THE FACT THAT NEARLY EVERY INSTITUTION IN
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FRANCE HAS TWO WINGS: THE TRADITIONAL CHURCH AND THE
YOUNG CHURCH WHICH HAS TURNED LEFT, THE MASONS ALLIED
WITH THE RADICAL SOCIALISTS AND THOSE WITH THE LEFT,
THE LEFT AND REFORMIST UNIONS, MARXIST INTELLECTUALS
AND THE NEW PHILOSOPHERS. HE IS ALSO STRUCK BY THE
IDEOLOGICAL CONTENT AND RIGIDITY OF THE DEBATE. THE
UNIONS LOOK TO IDEOLOGICAL INSPIRATION MORE THAN IN
MOST OTHER COMPARABLE COUNTRIES, AND THE POLITICAL
PARTIES ARE CERTAINLY LOCKED INTO MORE RIGID POSITIONS
THAN ELSEWHERE. PART OF THE REASON IS THE UNCOM-
PROMISING NATURE OF THE BOURGEOISIE IN FRANCE, THE
STRONG AND EARLY IMPLANTATION OF MARXISM AND THE
RESULTING STAND-OFF BETWEEN THE TWO.

4. A DESIRE FOR CHANGE: IN TODAY'S FRANCE, DESPITE
THE BICKERINGS IN THE OPPOSITION, THE POLLS HAVE BEEN
REMARKABLY CONSISTENT IN SHOWING THAT HALF THE FRENCH
VOTERS WANT A CHANGE. THIS DESIRE OBVIOUSLY TRANSCENDS
PARTY LABELS. SOME OF ITS INGREDIENTS:

--ECONOMIC INEQUITIES COVER A WIDE RANGE OF
EVILS FROM THE SPREAD IN SALARIES, TAX FRAUD, A RATHER
UNPROGRESSIVE TAX STRUCTURE, AND MINIMAL INHERITANCE
AND CAPITAL GAINS TAXES. THE CONSEQUENCES OF THE
DISPARITY IN WEALTH ARE FELT THROUGH INADEQUATE HOUS-
ING, TRANSPORT FACILITIES, RECREATION, ETC.

--GOVERNMENT CENTRALIZATION IS, AMONG INSTITU-
TIONAL SHORTCOMINGS, THE MOST IN NEED OF ATTENTION.
DESPITE INNUMERABLE STUDIES ON WAYS TO PROMOTE LOCAL
INITIATIVE, TO RATIONALIZE ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT
REGIONALLY AND TO SHARE FINANCIAL RESPONSIBILITIES
AT ALL LEVELS, FRANCE REMAINS PROFOUNDLY JACOBIN--
DEVOTED TO A MASSIVE, AND OFTEN SUFFOCATING CENTRALISM.
IT MUST BE THE ONLY COUNTRY IN THE WORLD WHERE MOST
OF THE MAYORS OF PROVINCIAL CITIES SPEND MOST OF THEIR
TIME IN THE CAPITAL. IT IS NOT THE ALLURE OF PARIS;
IT IS SIMPLY THAT PARIS IS WHERE THE POWER IS.
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--RELATED TO THE ABOVE, PARTICIPATION IN ALL
ASPECTS OF LIFE, FROM CITY GOVERNMENT TO THE WORK
PLACE, IS A THEME OFTEN FOUND LACKING. THE PATERNAL-
ISTIC TRADITION, WHETHER THE PARIS ADMINISTRATION OR
THE COMPANY HEAD, IS STILL STRONG. THE CHIEF IS

ELECTED OR APPOINTED TO WORRY ABOUT HIS SUBJECTS,
UNTIL A NEW ONE TAKES HIS PLACE, WITH LITTLE INTER-
ACTION AMONG THE VARIOUS LEVELS IN BETWEEN. POLITICAL
PARTIES OF ALL STRIPES ADVANCE SLOGANS WHICH GO TO
THIS NEED--FROM THE "PARTICIPATION" OF THE GAULLISTS
TO THE "SELF-MANAGEMENT" OF THE SOCIALISTS.

--ACCESS TO HIGHER EDUCATION, DESPITE FREE AND
OBLIGATORY SCHOOLING UP TO 16 YEARS OF AGE, REMAINS
BY AND LARGE A PRIVILEGE OF CLASS. THE NUMBER OF
WORKERS' CHILDREN IN THE "GRANDES ECOLES" IS MINIMAL
(LESS THAN 5 IN SOME), HIGHER IN THE UNIVERSITIES
BUT STILL WITH A LOW AVERAGE OF SUCCESSFUL GRADUATES.

--WOMEN'S LIBERATION HAS HAD A SLOW AND LATE
START IN TRADITION-BOUND FRANCE. THE POLITICAL

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PARTIES' SCRAMBLE FOR WOMEN CANDIDATES BEFORE THE NEXT ELECTION IS ONLY ONE EXAMPLE OF BELATEDLY WAKING UP TO THE FACT THAT WOMEN CONSTITUTE 52 OF THE ELECTORATE. GISCARD'S RECENT, AND SOMEWHAT ARTIFICIAL, ELEVATION OF THREE WOMEN TO MINISTERIAL POSTS IS A RECOGNITION OF THIS NEED.

--ECOLOGY, WHICH HAS GROWN FROM NOTHING TO A NATIONWIDE MOVEMENT REPRESENTING 5 OF THE VOTE IN TEN MONTHS, IS ANOTHER WAY FOR PEOPLE TO EXPRESS THEMSELVES AGAINST GOVERNMENT, BIGNESS, TECHNOLOGY AND THE UNKNOWN.

--THE MEDIA, MUCH CRITICIZED DURING DE GAULLE'S YEARS AS PRESIDENT, ARE STILL SEEN BY MANY AS THE INSTRUMENT OF THE STATE USED WITH VARYING SKILL AND SUBTLETY AGAINST THE POLITICAL OPPOSITION. THE RECENT APPOINTMENT OF THE FOREIGN MINISTER'S CHEF DE CABINET TO RUN A MAJOR TELEVISION STATION CAN ONLY CONFIRM SUCH APPREHENSIONS.

--FINALLY, A FEELING WHICH RUNS THROUGH ALL THE ABOVE: THERE IS AN ABSENCE OF NEW FACES IN POSITIONS OF RESPONSIBILITY WHO COULD IDENTIFY WITH THE GRIEVANCES OF A LARGE PART OF THE POPULATION AND WHO COULD SPEARHEAD NEEDED REFORMS. OF ALL THE IMPETUS FOR CHANGE, THIS IS PROBABLY THE STRONGEST.

5. THE MYTH OF MAY 1968. THE NOW LEGENDARY "EVENTS" OF MAY 1968 REMAIN THE STANDING EVIDENCE FOR THE LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

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THESIS THAT FRENCH SOCIETY IS TROUBLED, THAT SOCIAL TENSION, ROOTED IN INEQUALITY AND INJUSTICE, TICKS AWAY LIKE A TIME BOMB, INEXORABLY BUILDING TOWARD CRITICAL MASS. LARGELY IGNORED, PERHAPS BECAUSE THE RESULTING SCENARIO IS NOT NEARLY AS EXCITING, ARE THE FACTS OF 1968, I.E., THE FAILURE OF THE STUDENT-BASED REVOLUTIONARY LEFT TO ATTRACT THE SUPPORT OF THE WORKING CLASS. THE REVOLUTIONARY ASPECT OF MAY 1968 WAS INDEED LIMITED TO A ROMANTIC, MIDDLE-CLASS EXULTATION OF THE BOUNDLESS POSSIBILITIES OF HUMAN FREEDOM, LEAVING TO SOME TEN MILLION WORKERS THE TASK OF PRAGMATICALLY EXPLOITING THE SITUATION FOR BETTER WAGES AND WORKING CONDITIONS. IT WAS THESE SAME WORKERS, THEIR UNIONS AND THE COMMUNIST PARTY, WHO LARGELY IGNORED THE CALL FOR A GENERAL STRIKE AND EVENTUALLY ASSISTED IN THE RETURN TO LAW AND ORDER. AND THE COUNTRY AS A WHOLE GAVE THE GAULLISTS A LANDSLIDE VICTORY IN THE NEXT ELECTION--1968 MAY BE REMEMBERED AS A YEAR IN WHICH FRENCH HISTORY REACHED A TURNING POINT AND DID NOT TURN. BUT WHILE 1968 MAY NOT HAVE BEEN A WORKERS' REBELLION, ITS MYTHOLOGY AS SUCH IS A CORE ELEMENT IN EXPLAINING A DEEPLY FELT RESIDUAL BELIEF IN THE EXPLOSIVE POTENTIAL OF POPULAR DISCONTENT.

6. THE ELECTION OF GISCARD D'ESTAING. MANY SAW IN GISCARD'S ELECTION IN 1974 ON A PROGRAM OF ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL REFORM A LAST CHANCE TO CATCH UP WITH THE HIGH HOPES RELEASED IN 1968 AND IMMEDIATELY AFTER. THEY ALSO SAW IN HIM A PRACTICAL WAY OUT OF THE INEXORABLE CHOICE BETWEEN POMPIDOLIAN CONTINUITY AND RADICAL CHANGE PREACHED BY THE COMMON PROGRAM OF THE SOCIALIST/COMMUNIST COALITION. THESE HOPES WERE MET WITH DISAPPOINTMENT FOR THREE YEARS. FIRST, GISCARD WAS GREATLY HANDICAPPED BY THE ECONOMIC CRISIS OF 1973, WHICH WAS SOMETIMES USED TO RATIONALIZE THAT LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

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THEN WAS NOT THE TIME EITHER TO ADD EXTRA CHARGES TO THE ALREADY HEAVY BURDEN ON THE STATE OR TO TINKER WITH THE COUNTRY'S DELICATE SOCIAL FABRIC. WHAT MINIREFORMS WERE PASSED WERE CRITICIZED AS BEING ONLY GADGETS, NOT THE STRUCTURAL SORT REPLYING TO THE URGENT BASIC NEEDS OF THE LESS PRIVILEGED. GISCARD SOMETIMES SUCCEEDED IN PUTTING THROUGH REFORMS (AS ON DIVORCE AND ABORTION) AT THE EXPENSE OF LOSING GAULLIST SUPPORT, BUT MORE OFTEN HE WAS CHECKMATED BY THESE SAME GAULLISTS, AS ON THE CAPITAL GAINS TAX AND THE

EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT. WHILE GISCARD RECOGNIZED THE NATURE OF "CRISIS" IN FRANCE--HE WROTE THE BEST-SELLER "FRENCH DEMOCRACY" AS THE THEORETICAL BASIS OF HIS "LIBERAL-ADVANCED SOCIETY"--HE COULDN'T MUSTER THE POLITICAL CLOUT TO BRING OFF HIS PROGRAM OF CHANGE. TRAPPED IN THE INSTITUTIONAL AND ELECTORAL REALITIES OF THE FIFTH REPUBLIC, GISCARD STILL LOOKS LONGINGLY TOWARD THE CENTER OF THE FRENCH POLITICAL LANDSCAPE AND EVEN BEYOND IT TO THE SOCIALIST PARTY.

7. THE CONTINUING ECONOMIC SQUEEZE. THE ISSUE WHICH

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TOUCHES THE INDIVIDUAL THE MOST DIRECTLY IS THE ECONOMIC SITUATION. THE LEFT'S APPROACH TO FRENCH PROBLEMS, BY REVIVING THE NATIONAL ECONOMY THROUGH STIMULATION OF CONSUMPTION, IS WELCOMED BY MANY VOTERS AS AN ALTERNATIVE TO THE "POLICY OF AUSTERITY" WHICH THE CURRENT GOVERNMENT IS ACCUSED OF FOLLOWING. PRIME MINISTER BARRE EMPHASIZES LIVING WITHIN FRANCE'S MEANS, A FAVORABLE BALANCE OF PAYMENTS POSITION AND THE STABILITY OF THE FRANC WHILE WAGES ARE VIRTUALLY FROZEN, JUST MANAGING TO KEEP PURCHASING POWER A MINUSCULE FRACTION AHEAD OF INFLATION. THE LEFT PROMISES TO "RESTRUCTURE" THE ECONOMY AND RUN IT MORE EFFICIENTLY, TO REDISTRIBUTE INCOME IN SUCH A WAY THAT THE MINIMUM WAGE CAN BE RAISED IMMEDIATELY BY 35 PERCENT WITHOUT SUCCUMBING TO EITHER INFLATIONIST OR PROTECTIONIST PRESSURES. WHILE NUMEROUS FRENCHMEN ARE OBVIOUSLY SKEPTICAL OF LEFT PROPOSALS, PARTICULARLY WHEN THE EXTENT OF COMMUNIST INFLUENCE IS NOT CERTAIN, THE APPEAL TO THE POCKETBOOK IS CLEAR.

8. AN OLD SAYING GOES THAT "WHILE A FRENCHMAN'S HEART MAY BE ON THE LEFT, HIS WALLET IS ON THE RIGHT." BUT WHILE THAT MAXIM REMAINS VALID FOR AN IMPORTANT PERCENTAGE OF THE FRENCH POPULATION, ANOTHER ALMOST EQUALLY LARGE PERCENTAGE NOW SEEMS TO CARRY THAT PROVERBIAL WALLET IN THE OTHER POCKET. THE QUESTION OF INCOME DISTRIBUTION IS AN IMPORTANT ONE AND ONE
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WHICH CONDITIONS THE VOTING REFLEXES OF MANY PEOPLE.

STATISTICALLY, FRANCE SHOWS THE HIGHEST INCOME DISPARITIES IN EUROPE, MAKING MORE CREDIBLE LEFT CLAIMS THAT THE STATE IS BIASED IN FAVOR OF CERTAIN SOCIAL CLASSES. THERE EXIST IN FACT "HAVE" AND "HAVE-NOT" CLASSES, OF WHICH THE LATTER (GENERALLY THE WORKING CLASS) IS EASILY MOBILIZED OVER QUESTIONS OF THE MINIMUM WAGE, HIGHER TAXES ON LARGE FORTUNES AND BIG BUSINESS, REDUCTION OF THE DIFFERENCES BETWEEN THE HIGHEST AND LOWEST PAID SECTORS OF THE SOCIETY, INCREASED SOCIAL BENEFITS FOR THE LOWER CLASSES--IN SHORT, MORE EQUITABLE INCOME DISTRIBUTION. SUPPORTERS OF SUCH MEASURES INCLUDE LARGE PORTIONS OF THE MIDDLE CLASS AS WELL, SOME OF WHOM, LIKE TEACHERS, HAVE NOT PROFITED FROM THE EXISTING SYSTEM, AND HAVE WATCHED THEIR EARNING POWER STAGNATE. OTHERS ARE SATISFIED ECONOMICALLY BUT WILL TEND TO VOTE FOR THE LEFT OUT OF CONSIDERATIONS OF JUSTICE AND EQUALITY.

9. REFORM DESPITE CONSERVATISM. IT IS REFORM WHICH MOST FRENCHMEN SEEK, NOT REVOLUTION. FEW FRENCH ARE WILLING TO JEOPARDIZE WHAT THEY HAVE WORKED FOR SO HARD FOR THIRTY YEARS--ALL FOR A VERY UNSURE ALTERNATIVE. THE SOCIALISTS, FOR EXAMPLE, TALK A REASONABLY RADICAL GAME AND HAVE ADOPTED A MARXIST-ORIENTED BRAND OF SOCIALISM, IN SOME PART FOR ELECTORAL REASONS. FEW FRENCH VOTERS REALLY SEEM TO ACCEPT SOCIALIST PRO-NOUNCEMENTS AT FACE VALUE, LOOKING BEHIND THE MARXIST FACADE TO A CORE-CONTENT OF SOCIAL DEMOCRATIC, REFORMIST THINKING. REFORM IS REALLY THE ONLY SALABLE POLITICAL PRODUCT, BECAUSE, AS RECENT POLLS DEMONSTRATE, 63 OUT OF 100 FRENCHMEN ARE HAPPY WITH THEIR CURRENT STATE OF AFFAIRS. THE HUMANLY INTOLERABLE CONDITIONS OF LIFE WHICH BREED THE DESPERATE ACTIONS OF REVOLUTION SIMPLY DO NOT EXIST. WHAT DOES EXIST IS A MODERN WORLD IN WHICH BASIC NECESSITIES HAVE BEEN LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

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SATISFIED, BUT WHICH HAS CREATED A NEW SET OF PROBLEMS - THE ANXIETIES AND UNCERTAINTIES OF A CONSUMER-ORIENTED, MATERIALISTIC EXISTENCE, CUT OFF FROM THE CUSTOM AND DISCIPLINE OF THE PAST, MARKED BY THE MORAL ALIENATION OF URBANIZED LIVING AND PRODUCTION LINE LABOR. SO ALTHOUGH THE FRENCH ARE HAPPY, THEY ARE PESSIMISTIC: 48 PERCENT EXPECT THINGS TO GET WORSE, WHILE ONLY 23 PERCENT SEE A ROSIER FUTURE. WITH A 3-4 PERCENT GROWTH RATE FORECAST FOR THE NEXT SEVERAL YEARS UNDER THE PRESENT REGIME, THE HAVE-NOTS CANNOT BE EXPECTED TO REACT ANY DIFFERENTLY.

10. THE REFORMIST POLITICIAN PLAYS TO THE NEEDS OF

MODERN FRANCE, ONE REASON WHY NEARLY EVERY POLITICIAN
TRIES TO COOPT THIS ROLE. IF HE IS SOCIALIST, HE
OFFERS A NEW WAY OF LIFE WHICH CLAIMS TO RETURN MORE
RESPONSIBILITY TO THE COMMON MAN, ALLOW HIM TO BE
MORE THE MASTER OF HIS OWN DESTINY, ENABLE HIM TO
REGULATE TO SOME DEGREE THE MORAL BRUTALITY AND DE-
HUMANIZING ASPECTS OF THE INDUSTRIAL STATE. IT IS IN
THAT CONTEXT THAT ISSUES LIKE DECENTRALIZATION,

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AMEMBASSY HELSINKI
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WORKERS' SELF-MANAGEMENT, AND PROTECTION OF THE ENVIRONMENT COME TO THE FOREFRONT OF THE FRENCH POLITICAL CONSCIENCE AND BID FOR EQUAL OR GREATER BILLING WITH THE BREAD AND BUTTER ISSUES OF UNEMPLOYMENT, INFLATION AND THE LIKE. THE SAME TYPES OF CONSIDERATIONS, PERHAPS LESS WELL ARTICULATED, ALSO MOTIVATE MILLIONS OF OTHER FRENCHMEN WHO CANNOT ACCEPT THE MARXIAN ORIENTATIONS OF SOCIALISM, PARTICULARLY ON THE ECONOMIC FRONT. EVEN THE GAULLISTS, FOR INSTANCE, CAN FIND INSPIRATION IN THE REFORMS OF THE 1960S IN SOCIAL SECURITY, FINANCE AND SALARIES. THEY PROPOSE FURTHER MEASURES TODAY FOR WORKER PARTICIPATION IN COMPANY PROFITS, JOBS AND BENEFITS FOR THE UNDERPRIVILEGED TO RESPOND TO THESE SAME ANXIETIES.

11. CONCLUSION. EVERY POLITICAL PARTY WILL NO DOUBT TALK REFORM ON SUCH ISSUES DURING THE REST OF THE ELECTION CAMPAIGN AND, IN THAT SENSE, THE "CHOICE OF SOCIETY" RHETORIC SO OFTEN USED TO DIFFERENTIATE LEFT FROM RIGHT IS MISLEADING. WHILE THE ELECTORAL SYSTEM WILL FORCE VOTERS TO CHOOSE IN MARCH BETWEEN SOCIALISTS AND COMMUNISTS ON THE ONE SIDE AND CENTRISTS AND GAULLISTS ON THE OTHER, THE RESULTS OF THE ELECTION WILL PROBABLY SHOW A CLEAR CONSENSUS FOR A MODERATE REFORMIST OPTION, HOWEVER AMBIGUOUSLY DEFINED. UNFORTUNATELY, ANY POSSIBLE CONSENSUS SEEMS CONSIGNED TO THE NETHERWORLD OF A LEFT-CENTER
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COALITION. SOCIAL DEMOCRACY OR ADVANCED LIBERAL DEMOCRACY MAY BE IDEAS WHOSE TIME HAS COME, BUT WITH COMMUNISTS ON THE LEFT AND THE RPR ON THE RIGHT, AND WITH ALL PARTIES OPERATING IN THE MILIEU OF ELECTORAL

INSTITUTIONS WHICH WORK AGAINST CENTRIST COMPROMISE,
IT IS NOT EASY TO SEE HOW AN APPARENT CONSENSUS OF
SPIRIT CAN TRANSLATE INTO A POLITICAL FORCE IN THE
NEAR-TERM. MORE FUNDAMENTALLY, THE SOCIALIST LEFT
AND LIBERAL CENTER MAY NOT EVEN BE ALL THAT CLOSE ON
THE BASIC ISSUES, THE FORMER REPRESENTING MORE THE
FRUSTRATED OF FRANCE AND THE LATTER THOSE ON WHOM THE
SYSTEM HAS SMILED MORE FAVORABLY. WHETHER THE DEMANDS
OF THE ONE AND THE CONCESSIONS OF THE OTHER--ALL IN
THE NAME OF SOCIAL JUSTICE--ARE COMPATIBLE IS THE
ISSUE THAT WILL TROUBLE FRANCE UP TO THE ELECTIONS
AND BEYOND THEM
HARTMAN

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Message Attributes

Automatic Decaptioning: X
Capture Date: 01 jan 1994
Channel Indicators: n/a
Current Classification: UNCLASSIFIED
Concepts: ELECTIONS, INTELLIGENCE ASSESSMENTS
Control Number: n/a
Copy: SINGLE
Draft Date: 16 jan 1978
Decaption Date: 01 jan 1960
Decaption Note:
Disposition Action: RELEASED
Disposition Approved on Date:
Disposition Case Number: n/a
Disposition Comment: 25 YEAR REVIEW
Disposition Date: 20 Mar 2014
Disposition Event:
Disposition History: n/a
Disposition Reason:
Disposition Remarks:
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Format: TEL
From: PARIS
Handling Restrictions: n/a
Image Path:
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Legacy Key: link1978/newtext/t19780159/aaaabxpx.tel
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Original Handling Restrictions: n/a
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Review Action: RELEASED, APPROVED
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Review Event:
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Review Release Date: n/a
Review Release Event: n/a
Review Transfer Date:
Review Withdrawn Fields: n/a
SAS ID: 3768268
Secure: OPEN
Status: NATIVE
Subject: FRANCE: A HOUSE DIVIDED NOTE: THIS CABLE IS THE FIRST IN A SERLES OF OVERVIEWS--WHICH WE ARE CALLING
"ELECTIONS 1978"--
TAGS: PINT, FR
To: STATE
Type: TE
vdkgvkey: odbc://SAS/SAS.dbo.SAS_Docs/238e63e3-c288-dd11-92da-001cc4696bcc
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